



Netsafe 2025 Annual Survey



Online Hate Speech Report



verian 



netsafe



Background and methodology

Background



Netsafe is an independent, not-for-profit organisation with a mission to promote online safety among New Zealanders.

In order to effectively meet New Zealanders' needs, since 2017 Netsafe has regularly commissioned surveys to understand the ongoing role of technology in people's lives and their experiences online. Each survey measure contains a mix of questions: (a) core questions which don't change over time, and (b) topical questions, focused on providing detailed information about an issue.

The 2025 survey was focused on:

- Understanding New Zealanders' digital behaviour,
- Assessing awareness of rights and options under the Harmful Digital Communications Act,
- Measuring awareness and use of support services for unwanted digital communications,
- Gaining insight into New Zealanders' experiences of unwanted communications and the impact these have on those who receive them,
- Measuring New Zealanders' online experiences of hate speech,
- Understanding New Zealanders' experiences as perpetrators of harmful digital communications,
- Understanding perceptions around online safety for young people, including a possible law preventing young people from accessing social media.

Reporting



This year, the following reports have been produced:

1. APS 2025 results
2. Trended results for APS core questions 2017-2025
3. Online hate speech – 2025 results and trends in 2018-2025
4. Social media ban – 2025 results
5. Māori population 2025 results and trends in 2023-2025

This report focuses on the Online hate speech results.

Methodology



1,648 New Zealanders aged 16 years and over completed an online survey between 6 and 30 June, 2025. The sample of survey participants was sourced from the same online research panels that were used in previous waves. The sample was structured to be representative of the population in terms of age, gender, ethnicity, and region.

Additional booster interviews were conducted with people aged 16-29 years to ensure we had sufficient samples within this age group for in-depth analysis. Additional booster interviews were also conducted with Māori to ensure we have sufficient samples for analysis and separate reporting (see Māori population report).

All data were weighted by age within gender, ethnicity and region to ensure booster interviews did not affect the representativeness of the overall results.



Average survey length: 17 minutes



Statistically significant differences (at the 95% confidence interval) between the 2025 survey results and the 2023 results and the benchmark results (2018) are indicated by coloured arrows.

Methodology

The overall results have been weighted to 2023 Census figures to align the data with Census counts for age within gender, ethnicity, and region.

Comparisons between Statistics New Zealand demographic data and the unweighted survey data suggested that post-survey weighting was required to ensure representative profiles and to correct for an over-representation of Māori respondents and respondents aged 16-29 years (these respondents were over sampled during fieldwork to ensure robust analysis could be carried out on the individual subgroups).

	Unweighted sample proportion	Weighted sample proportion
16 to 17 years old	4%	3%
18 to 29 years old	34%	19%
30 to 39 years old	13%	18%
40 to 49 years old	15%	15%
50 to 59 years old	13%	16%
60 to 69 years old	12%	14%
70 + years old	10%	14%
Male	50%	49%
Female	50%	51%
Gender diverse*	<1%	<1%
Pacific peoples	7%	7%
Asian peoples	14%	17%

	Unweighted sample proportion	Weighted sample proportion
Northland	4%	4%
Auckland	34%	33%
Waikato	10%	10%
Bay of Plenty	6%	7%
Gisborne/Hawke's Bay	5%	4%
Taranaki/ Manawatū-Whanganui	7%	7%
Wellington	11%	11%
Tasman/Nelson/Marlborough/ West Coast	4%	4%
Canterbury	12%	13%
Otago/Southland	6%	7%

*In this report those who are described as LGBTQI+ include: gender diverse people, those who are gay or lesbian, bisexual, Takatāpui, or another sexuality.



Key findings

Key findings

Experience of online hate speech



Twelve percent of New Zealanders have personally experienced online hate speech in the past year.

The proportion of New Zealanders experiencing any form of online hate speech has dropped slightly from 2019 and 2020 (15%).

New Zealanders under the age of 30, Māori, and LGBTQIA+ community members are more likely than average to have experienced hate speech in the last 12 months.

Perceived reasons for being targeted by hate speech most often include ethnicity, race and political views.

Hate speech relating to ethnicity has grown steadily since 2018 and is now clearly the most widely experienced hate speech (36%).

Exposure to online hate speech



31%

A horizontal bar chart with a purple segment on the left representing 31% and a grey segment on the right representing the remaining 69%.

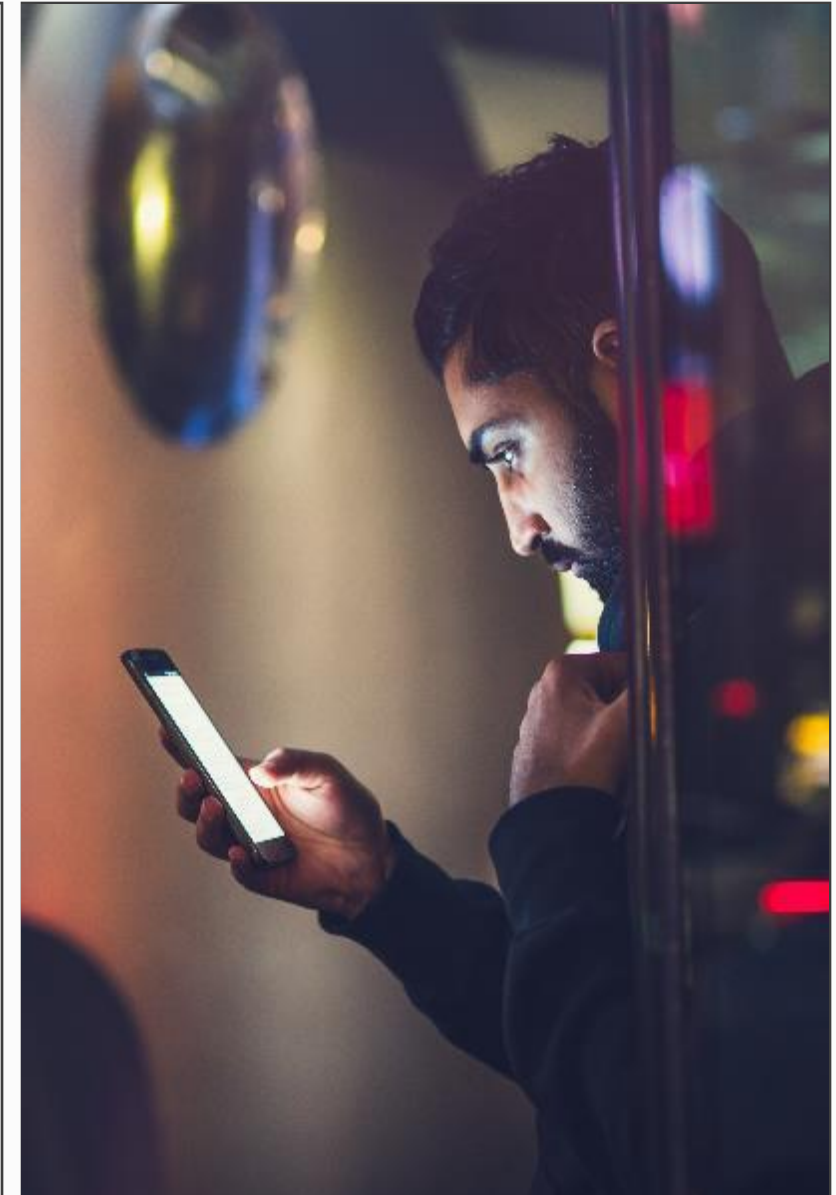
A third of New Zealanders have witnessed online hate speech targeting someone else in the past year.

This has remained broadly consistent over time.

New Zealanders in the LGBTQIA+ community and New Zealanders aged under 30 are more likely than average to have seen online hate speech targeting someone else in the last 12 months.

Perceived reasons behind hate speech most often include race, political views and ethnicity.

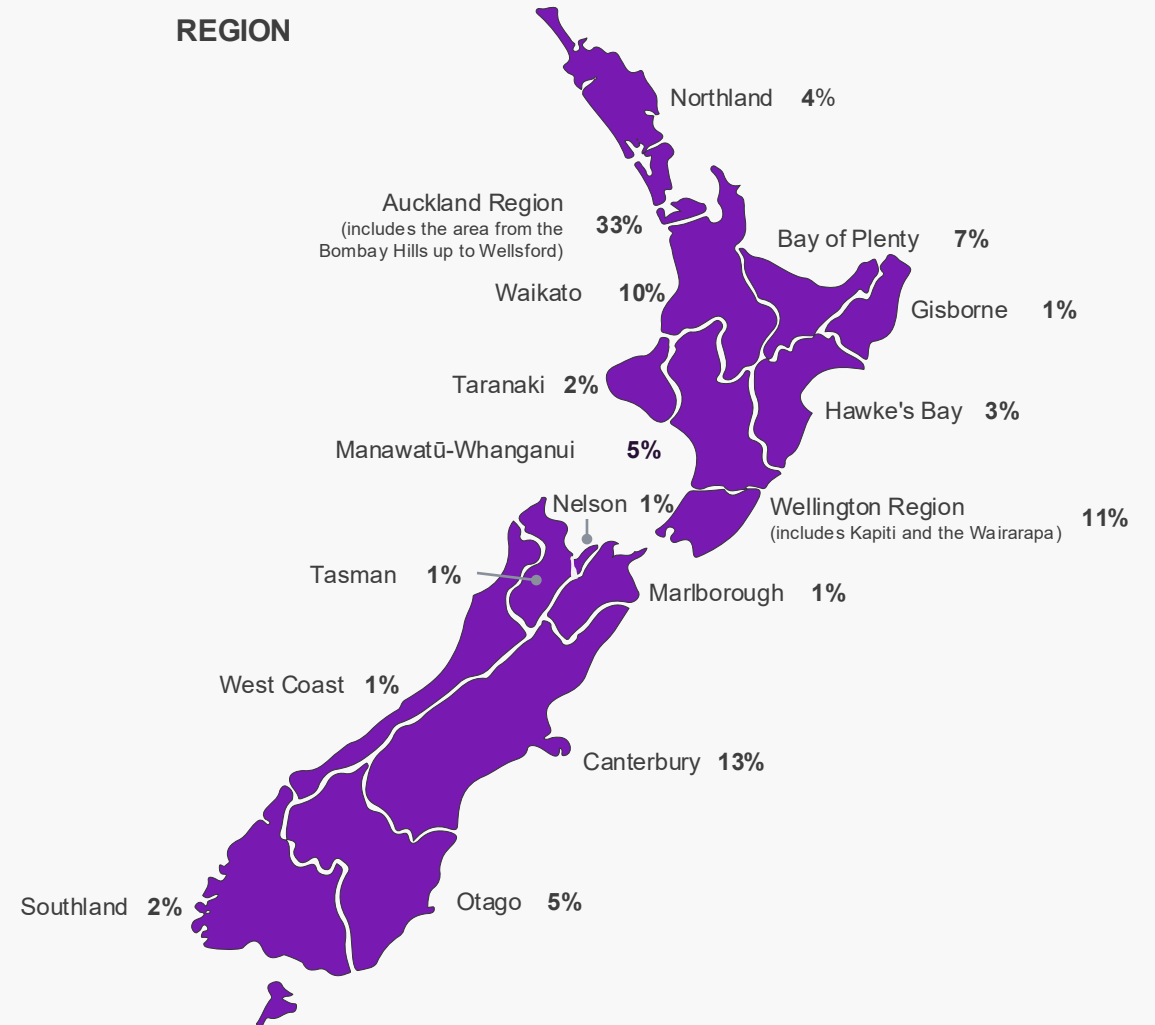
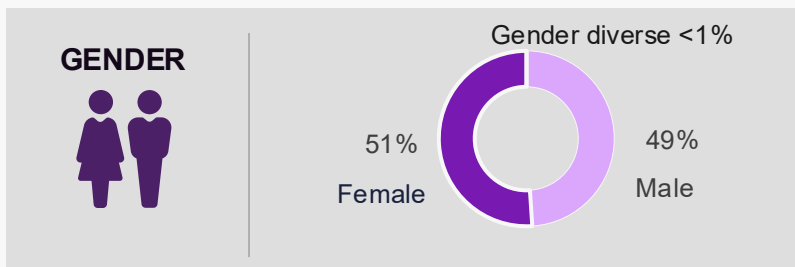
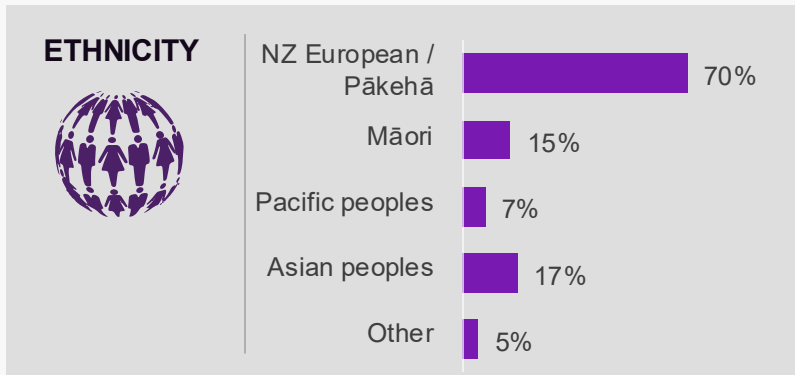
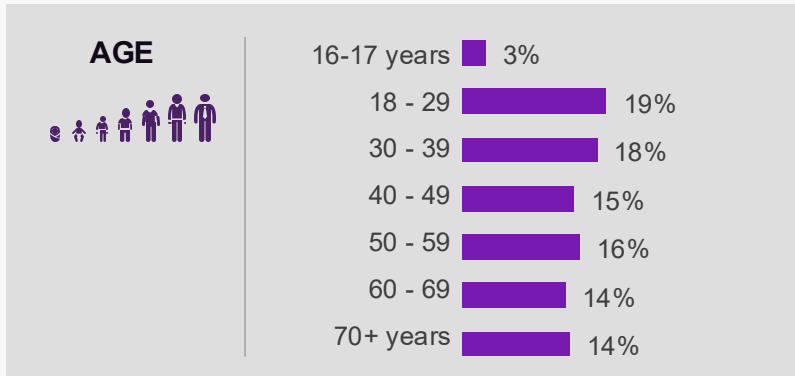
Hate speech relating to political views has increased since 2023, while religion based hate speech is significantly lower than in 2018.





Sample profile

Weighted sample profile

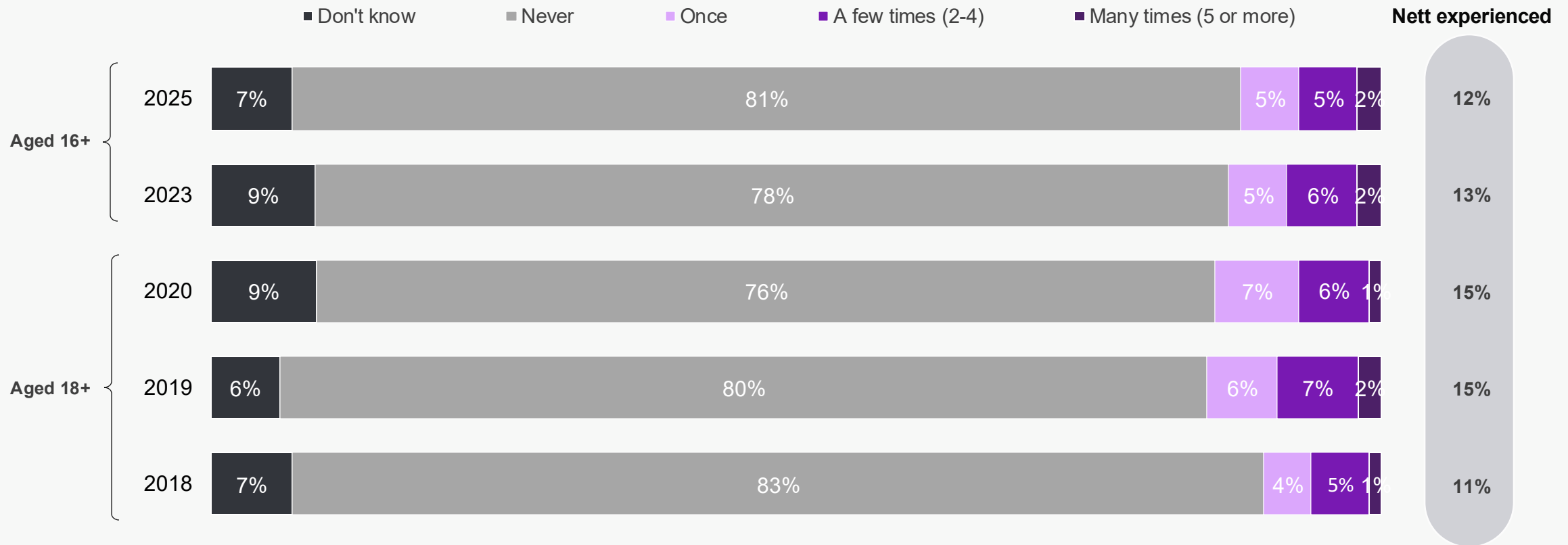




Online hate speech

Twelve percent of New Zealanders received digital communications that contained hate speech in the past year. This is slightly lower than the levels seen in 2019 and 2020.

Personally experienced hate speech in the last 12 months

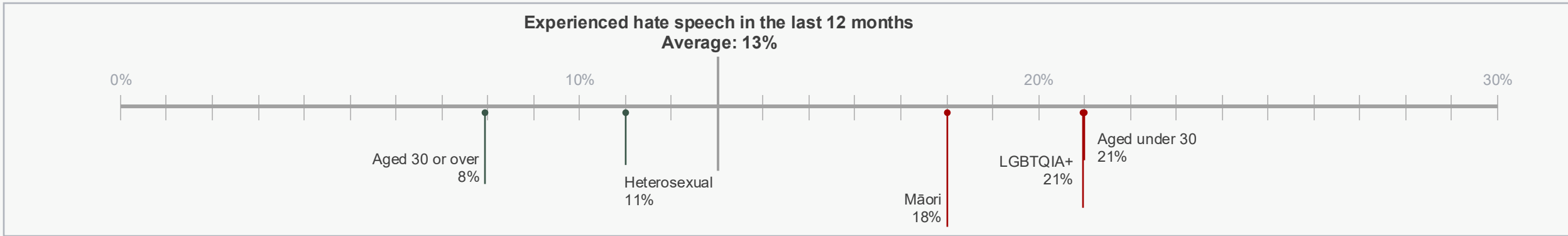
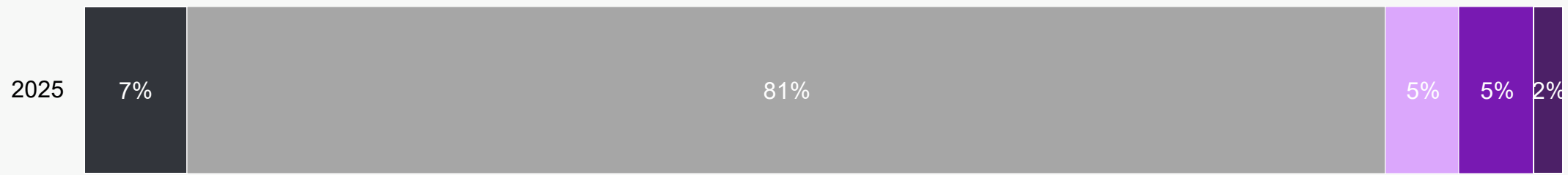


▲ Significant increase/decrease since 2023 ▲ Significant increase/decrease since 2018

New Zealanders under the age of 30, Māori and LGBTQIA+ community members are more likely than average to have experienced hate speech in the last 12 months.

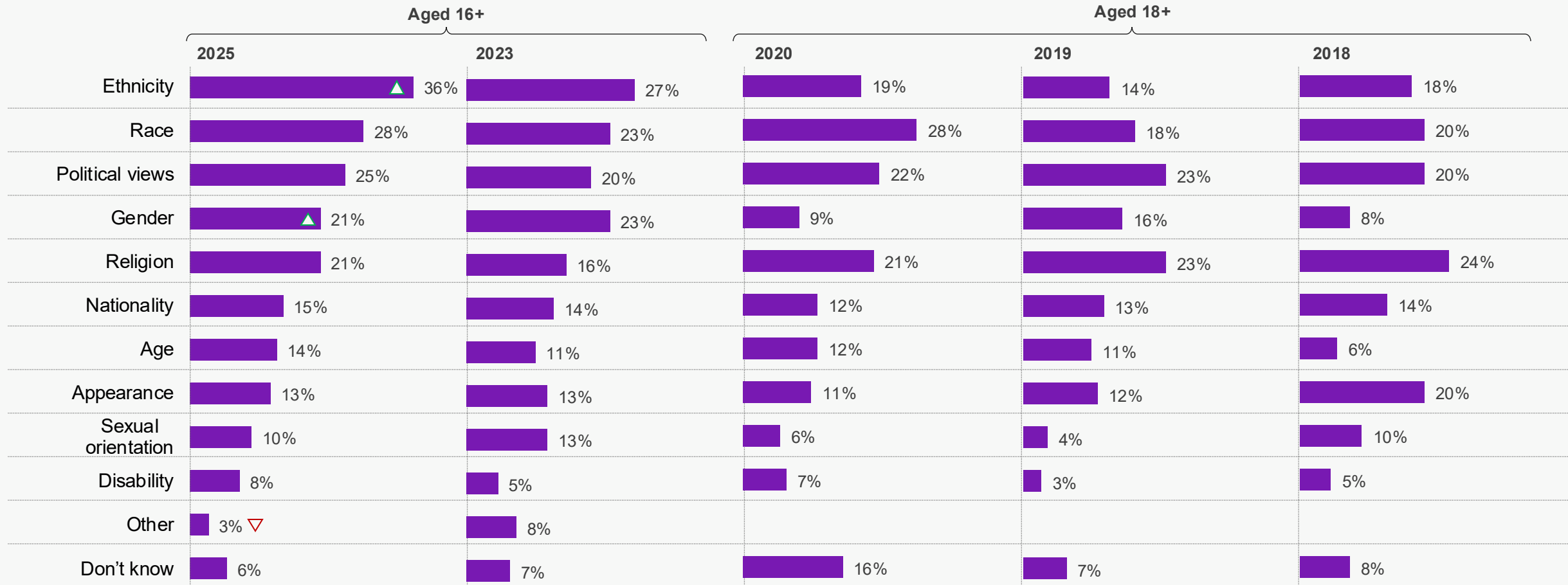
Personally experienced hate speech in the last 12 months

■ Don't know ■ Never ■ Once ■ A few times (2-4) ■ Many times (5 or more)



Reasons for being targeted by hate speech are wide-ranging, but most commonly cited are ethnicity, race and political views. Hate speech relating to ethnicity has steadily grown since 2018 and is now clearly the most widely experienced form of hate speech.

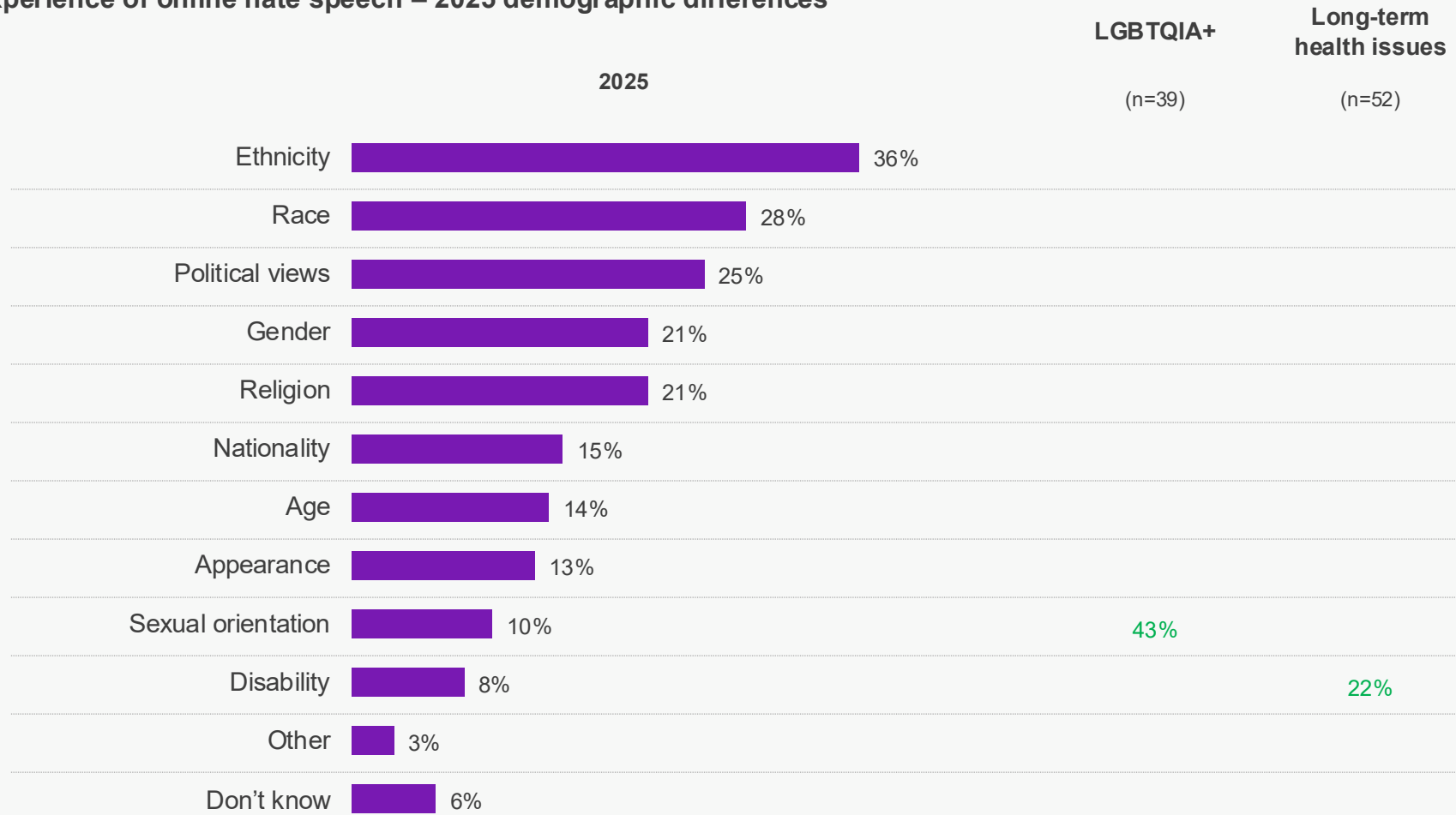
Personal experience of online hate speech - over time



▲ ▼ Significant increase/decrease since 2020 ▲ ▼ Significant increase/decrease since 2018

Around four in ten LGBTQIA+ community members report being the target of hate speech about sexual-orientation, and nearly one quarter of New Zealanders with long-term health issues report being the target of disability-based hate speech.

Personal experience of online hate speech – 2025 demographic differences



Nearly a third of New Zealanders have been exposed to online hate speech in the past year. This proportion has remained broadly consistent over time.

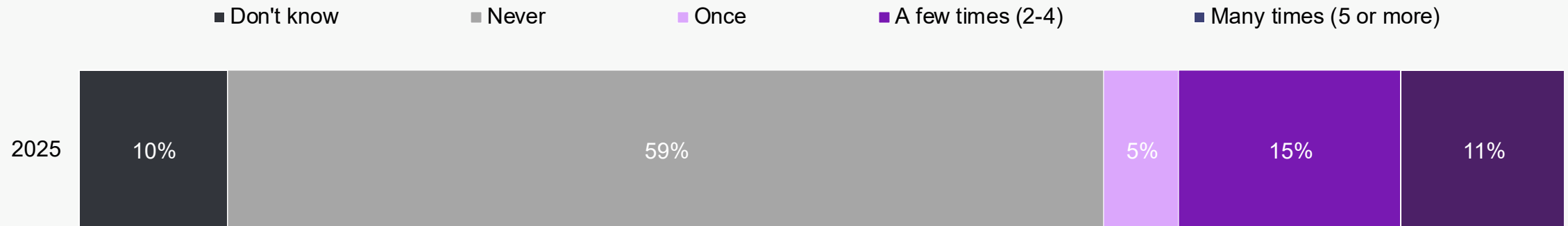
Exposure to online hate speech - over time



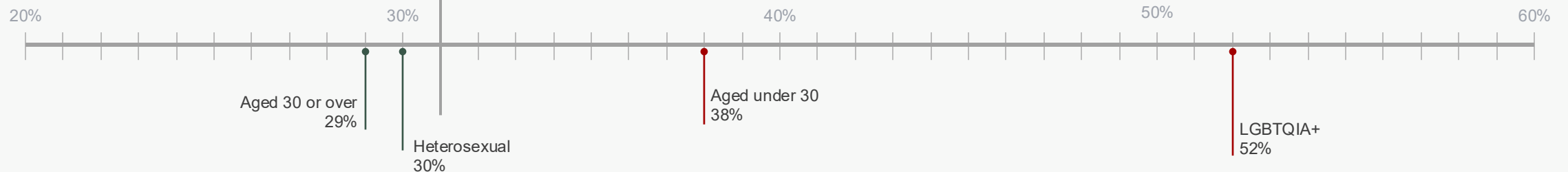
▲ Significant increase/decrease since 2020 ▲ Significant increase/decrease since 2018

LGBTQIA+ community members and New Zealanders aged under 30 are more likely than average to have seen or been exposed to online hate speech targeting someone else in the last 12 months.

Exposure to online hate speech - 2025 demographic differences

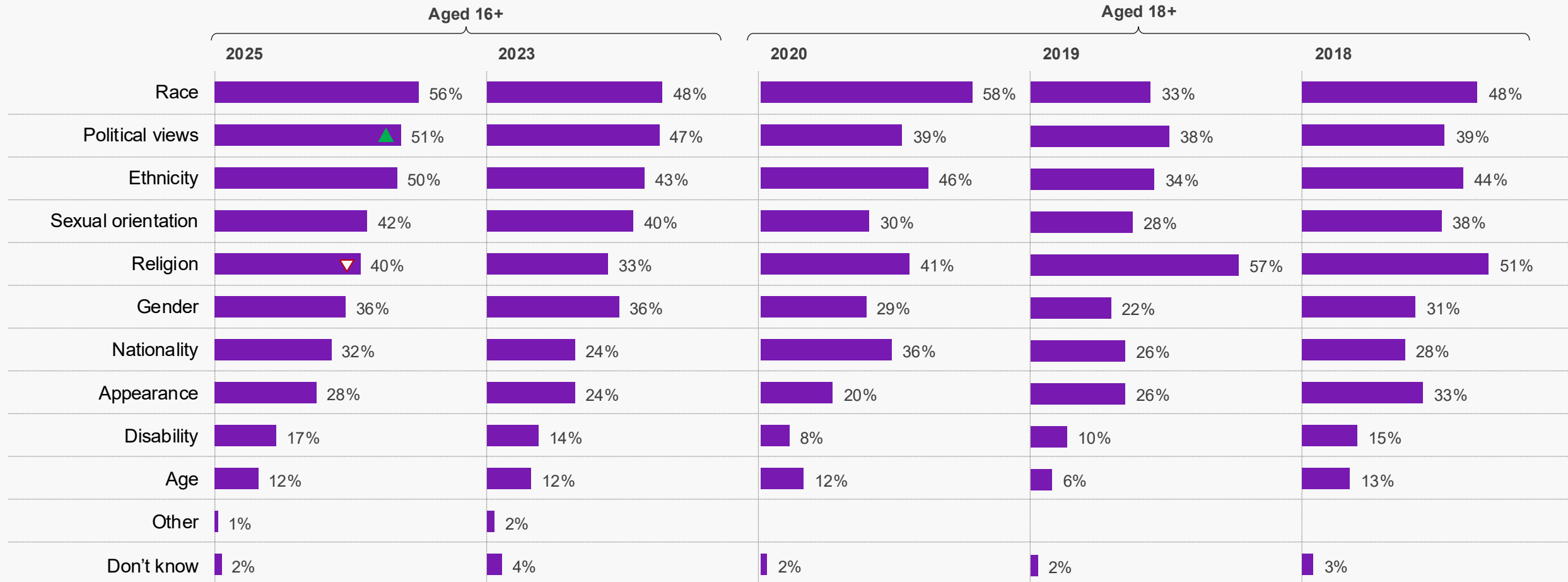


Seen online hate speech targeting someone else in the last 12 months
Average: 31%



Instances of online hate speech (targeting someone else) are most commonly based around the themes of race, political views and ethnicity. Since 2023 more have seen hate speech targeting political views. Compared with 2018 fewer New Zealanders have seen religion-based online hate speech in 2025.

Perceived reason others were targeted for online hate speech



▲▼ Significant increase/decrease since 2020 ▲▼ Significant increase/decrease since 2018

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION PLEASE CONTACT:

Christine Chubb

Verian New Zealand
Level 6 (Suite 601), 48 Greys Ave, Auckland 1010

<https://www.veriangroup.com/en-nz/>